



Age and Dementia Friendly South Hadley

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

OCTOBER 2021

Acknowledgements

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- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission



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Introduction

Several different but overlapping planning, education and community engagement efforts that have been completed in South Hadley leading to the development of this Community Assessment and Action Plan. These efforts included the following:

- 1) A Dementia Friendly Community initiative was an effort led by the Council on Aging in collaboration with staff from the Loomis Communities. This initiative involved a series of educational programs to build awareness about dementia and programs to support people living with dementia and their caregivers.
- 2) The Age & Dementia Friendly Communities Initiative was a collaboration with the communities of Chicopee, Holyoke and South Hadley, and with participation by representatives from WestMass Elder Care and the Loomis Communities and technical assistance provided by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). Funding for this project was provided by a Momentum Fund grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and supplemented by PVPC's Local Technical Assistance funding. The project was designed to build on the interest and momentum of the participating communities in becoming designated as Age and Dementia Friendly Communities.
- 3) The South Hadley Master Plan was in development as the first Age and Dementia Friendly Initiative was in progress. Public forums during the Master Plan process included one large forum and smaller focus group meetings at the Senior Center focused on the aging population in relation to the built environment.
- 4) The Age and Dementia Friendly Pioneer Valley Initiative with funding from a Community Engagement Grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation to fund technical assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to complete a Community Assessment and Action Plan report for the town.

During the development of this Action Plan, the Age and Dementia Friendly South Hadley Working Group determined that the Town's Master Plan should serve as the foundation of the Community Assessment portion of the Action Plan for an Age and Dementia Friendly Community as it was developed through a very thorough and participatory process and serves as the roadmap for the Town's future. At the time this report is being written, the Master Plan Update was still in draft form but is in the process of being adopted by the Town. The version reviewed for this report and Action Plan is the December 2020 draft posted on the Town's website.¹

¹ <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/7464/DRAFT-2020-Master-Plan-Update-as-Recommended-by-the-Master-Plan-Update-Advisory-Committee-2020-12-03>

The purpose of this report is to highlight findings from the community engagement efforts that have been completed in South Hadley around planning for an aging population, primarily the findings that have been included in the South Hadley Master Plan, and to develop an Action Plan of strategies intended for implementation over the next five years to improve the livability of South Hadley for people of all ages.

Much of the work of refining this plan for the Town of South Hadley was completed during the COVID-19 Pandemic (during much of 2020-2021), which highlighted concerns for many older adults around social isolation, food insecurity, and access to internet as a primary means of communication and civic participation. During this time, the Town was also in the process of building a new Senior Center. Without being able to meet in person, the Age & Dementia Friendly Working Group met virtually via Zoom to review findings and to develop a final Action Plan for submission to the AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.

Why Plan for an Aging Population?

According to US Census figures, older adults (over the age of 65) are projected to outnumber children under the age of 18 by 2035. This has ramifications for employment, housing, transportation, health care, and many other aspects of society. According to Community Profile data compiled by the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative (MHAC), the population of South Hadley had slightly higher percentages of adults over 65 (17.8%) when compared to the State (at 15.1%)². While the demographics are rapidly changing, changes to the built environment tend to take a long time. Therefore, it is important that communities be proactive in making regulatory changes that could promote improvements to the built environment to better accommodate an aging population.

The Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community

The World Health Organization developed a model for assessing communities' ability to support an aging population that includes eight domains of livability. This model includes elements of the physical and social environments that are key determinants of whether people can remain healthy, independent, and autonomous as they age. The model is helpful in considering elements of a community that extend beyond the built environment and that are critical to the needs of older adults, but also contribute to healthy, active, more livable communities. The original model included Eight Domains of Livability for an Age Friendly Community. However, over time communities found that it made more sense to plan around domains of the community that impact their abilities to be both Age and Dementia Friendly. The Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative modified the Eight Domains of Livability into the

² MHAC Community Profile – from 2018 ACS 5-year profile data

Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community. Some communities have also added domains such as Food Security to these domain areas.

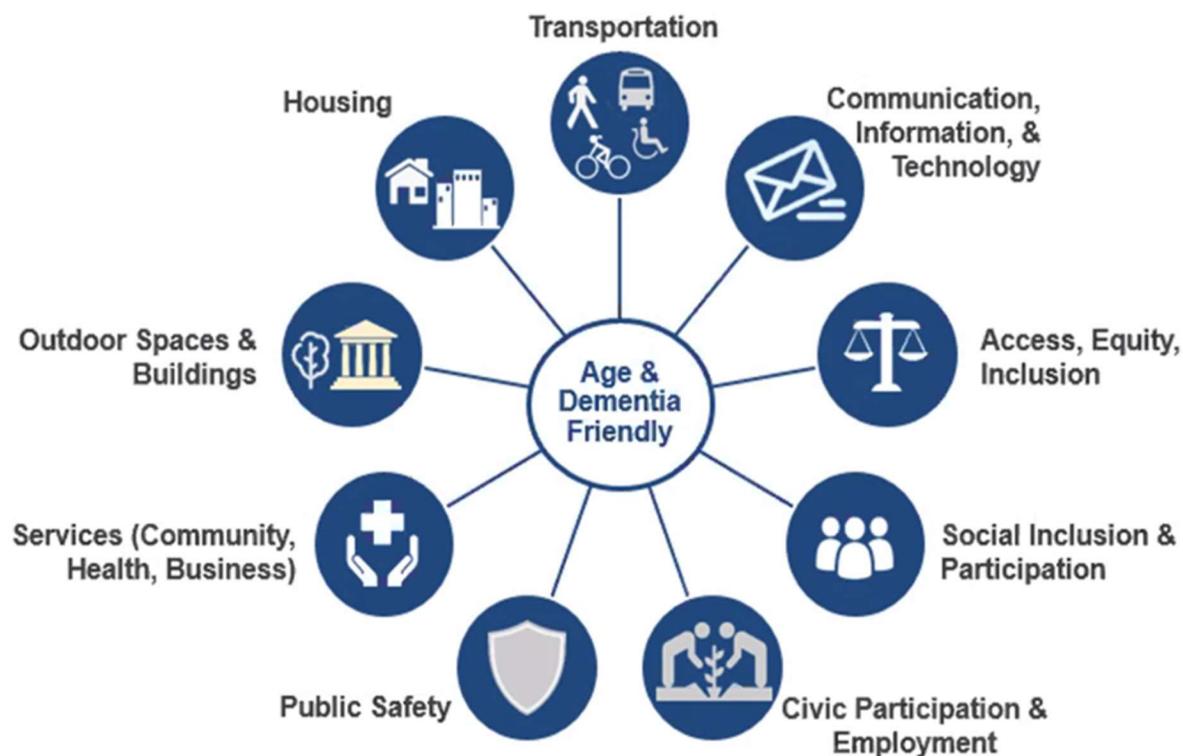


Figure 1 - The Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community (Source: Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative)

Ten Sectors of a Dementia Friendly Community

In planning for an aging population, communities must also consider the increasing number of people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia. It is important for many sectors of the community to be educated about how to recognize the signs of dementia and how to work with people who have dementia. In addition, many people with dementia are supported by family or professional caregivers. These individuals may require training or emotional support during a difficult time. Communities can provide safe and comfortable spaces for people with dementia and their caregivers to meet or seek respite care.

Dementia Friendly America is a national network of communities, organizations and individuals seeking to ensure that communities across the United States are equipped to support people living with dementia and their caregivers. Dementia Friendly Communities foster the ability of people living with dementia to remain in community and engage and thrive.

Dementia Friendly America lists ten sectors that should be dementia informed in order to create a dementia friendly community³:

1. **Transportation, Housing and Public Spaces (local government)** – Infrastructure that makes communities more livable for people with dementia and their caregivers
2. **Businesses** – Dementia supportive customer service, environments and policies that support employee caregivers
3. **Legal and Advance Planning Services** – Legal services that help vulnerable clients express their wishes early and avoid problems such as unpaid expenses
4. **Banks and Financial services** - Dementia friendly practices that help maintain clients' independence while protecting them from problems
5. **Neighbors and Community Members** – Raising awareness to help neighbors and community members understand and support people living with dementia
6. **Independent Living** – Home-based services available to maximize independence and promote autonomy and a high quality of life
7. **Communities of Faith** – Faith communities use dementia friendly practices to provide a welcoming, compassionate environment and spiritual connection
8. **Care throughout the Continuum** – Early diagnosis of dementia and ongoing medical care; patient education; and connecting patients and their caregivers with community resources that promote quality of life
9. **Memory Loss Supports and Services** – A spectrum of settings and services needed by people with dementia – from long-term care facilities and assisted and independent living residences, to home care, adult day services, and hospice care.
10. **Emergency Planning and First Response** – Community planning and family preparation considers safety, security, and needs of people with dementia in disaster planning and emergency response.

It is important for communities to plan for people with dementia while preparing for more livable communities, as data indicates that the numbers of people with dementia will continue to rise as the population ages.

South Hadley's Dementia Friendly Initiative

Starting in 2015, the South Hadley Council on Aging in collaboration with the Loomis Communities has conducted a number of educational programs to raise awareness about dementia. The Dementia Friendly Initiative in South Hadley included a campaign of education and outreach to the community and involved trainings for first responders, an educational series at the library, a webpage sponsored by the Loomis Communities, a monthly memory café at the South Hadley Senior Center, an interview with a caregiver that was broadcast on the local Cable Access channel; a Dementia Friends program held at South Hadley High School; education

³ <https://www.dfamerica.org/what-is-dfa>

on Dementia for businesses; a series for supporting aging family members, and a Virtual Dementia tour of the senior center held by Beth Cardillo of Armbrook Village. Carol Constant, a town resident active with the Council on Aging has also provided Dementia Friends trainings at the high school and a Memory Training class at the Senior Center in 2019 and 2020 for people with age-related memory loss. In 2021 South Hadley resident and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Karen Bescemi, led trainings for South Hadley Police Officers on dementia, elder abuse and other issues faced by older adults. A full timeline of the activities conducted under the Dementia Friendly initiative may be found in **Appendix A**.

The Action Plan sections of this report includes strategies for continuing with the Dementia Friendly initiative training for community members, and programs that support people with dementia and their caregivers.

Age and Dementia Friendly Priorities for South Hadley

Through a series of meetings with the Age and Dementia Friendly Working Group, the following priorities were identified for an Age and Dementia Friendly Action Plan. These include the following:

1. **Awareness and Education** – About people with dementia, people with disabilities, Ageism
2. **Culture of Inclusion** – For all ages and abilities, races and ethnicities (including non-English speakers), religions, gender preference, people with disabilities, people with dementia
3. **Food Security** – Access to Emergency Food and prepared meals, transportation to get to Neighbors Helping Neighbors and food shopping
4. **Transportation** – Services, walking and biking, ADA accessibility
5. **Communication and Technology** – Ensuring access, equipment, training
6. **Outdoor Spaces** – Accessible places to gather in all seasons
7. **Health & Community Services** – Home health care services, long term care, personal care assistance services
8. **Housing** – Opportunities for downsizing, affordability, support for aging in place
9. **Public Safety & Resiliency** – Preparing to assist people who need additional help during emergencies.

The following sections summarize the findings in the South Hadley Master Plan as well as the additional community engagement activities that the Town has undertaken around these issues and identifies action steps that the Town will take over the next five years.

Awareness and Education

Building awareness and education around aging and people living with dementia is the highest priority for building an Age and Dementia Friendly Community. The Council on Aging, Friends of South Hadley Seniors, the Loomis Communities, and resident volunteers have been working diligently on a public awareness campaign around recognizing and working with people with dementia since 2016, creating flyers, conducting outreach on social media, hosting educational programs for firefighters and first responders, participating in and conducting Dementia Friends trainings, and holding an educational series at the South Hadley Library.

The South Hadley Master Plan does not specifically discuss the increasing number of people living with dementia in the community but does promote a welcoming and supportive environment. The **Community Vision** for the Master Plan is as follows:

The community and the municipal government share a focus on maintaining a positive, mutually supportive relationship that establishes and implements policies that support a healthy and sustainable natural, physical, and economic environment in which the entire community can prosper. These policies encourage access to a variety of jobs, goods, services, housing types, and educational, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for the individuals who live, work, play, and learn in South Hadley.

One of the top three priorities identified by the Master Plan Update Advisory Committee is to “Support a welcoming community for all ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, abilities and income levels.” Through reframing the way aging is perceived in the community, as well as developing a strong sense of awareness of people living with dementia, South Hadley will develop a more welcoming and supportive environment for older adults and people living with dementia.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- Flyers with resources for caregivers, people with dementia
- Educational programs for first responders & firefighters (2016, 2018)
- Developed a Dementia Friendly SH Facebook Page
- Alzheimer’s Association educational series at the library (2016)
- Monthly Memory Cafes
- Interview with Rachel Tierney on Cable Access TV (2017)
- Dementia Friends training events at the Senior Center and High School (2018, 2019)
- Educational program for businesses/COC

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

MP Goal 1: South Hadley creates an environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

MP Objective 1-7: Be a welcoming community that attracts and supports a diverse population.

Priority Actions:

1. Continue to build a campaign on dementia awareness through outreach and education for community members, businesses, banks, schools, and first responders.
2. **MP Action G1-12** – Raise Awareness of the stigma of ageism and promote opportunities to highlight the wisdom and strength of aging.
3. **MP G3-24:** Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are now or have been under-represented in the community, as demographics change over time, to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.

Awareness and Education Action Plan

# MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Continue to build a campaign on dementia awareness through outreach and education for community members, businesses, banks, schools, and first responders.	Council on Aging (COA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number and types of trainings and outreach methods ▪ Number of participants ▪ Sectors educated 	ST
2 G1-12	Raise Awareness of the stigma of ageism and promote opportunities to highlight the wisdom and strength of aging.	COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Types of outreach. ▪ Number of people reached. ▪ Actions taken as a result of increased awareness. 	MT
3 G3-24	Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are now or have been under-represented in the community, as demographics change over time, to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.	SHCTV All boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of videos. ▪ Number of boards and committees participating. ▪ Feedback from viewers. 	ST

Culture of Inclusion

Similar to promoting awareness and education around people living with dementia, the Town plans to develop a more inclusive community for all races, ethnicities, non-English speakers, people with cognitive and physical impairments, veterans, and people living in a variety of housing types. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many populations that were more at risk of contracting the virus due to underlying conditions such as poverty, racism, and unhealthy living environments. By addressing the root causes of inequities that exist in communities through changes in systems, policies and environments, we can begin to achieve greater health equity.

In June of 2020, the South Hadley Selectboard took a public stance against racism in all forms, “including but not limited to violence, racism in language, in publications and teachings, and in behavior.” The Selectboard pledged to proactively address racism in South Hadley and within municipal government. A Coalition for Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE) formed to “systematically address and undo racism in our town,” and municipal staff have received trainings on undoing racism.

The Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative has developed a Healthy Aging for All guide that includes an “Inclusive Communities Crosswalk” and worksheet that communities can use to think about being inclusive of all stakeholder groups that live in the community. As strategies are planned for implementation, lead entities can look at this Crosswalk and think about how the strategy is reaching all sectors of the population. The Inclusive Community Crosswalk has been included in **Appendix B**.

In addition to racism, ageism is a form of discrimination that can cause harm to older adults in a community. Creating more opportunities for interaction between older adults and young people, and for people of all cultures and backgrounds, can build stronger communities. People living with dementia and their caregivers should be included in social activities, and also benefit from activities that provide a comfortable and supportive environment for them to socialize and connect with others facing similar challenges.

Language can also present barriers to social engagement and inclusion. Many older adults who do not speak English are more likely to feel isolated. Understanding the needs of non-English speakers in the community and how best to communicate with them and to make them feel welcome and supported can allow them to participate more fully in programming and to engage in the community.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- South Hadley Coalition for Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE)
- Municipality – Trainings for staff on race, racism, equity
- Memory Café offered at the Senior Center
- WestMass Elder Care Rainbow Supper in Holyoke

- New Commission on Disabilities

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

MP Goal 1: South Hadley creates an environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

MP Objective 1-7: Be a welcoming community that attracts and supports a diverse population.

MP Goal 3: South Hadley incorporates measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town’s resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, changing demographic trends, climate change, or other stressors.

MP Objective 3-3: Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are now or have been under-represented in the community, as demographics change over time, to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.

MP Goal 4: South Hadley is a leader in municipal communication.

MP Objective 4-1: Support a strong sense of a multi-ethnic, multiracial community identity through coordinated visual presentation, including graphics and typefaces in all communications (reports, informational materials, signage and Town website, social media, and other messaging).

Priority Actions:

1. **MP Action 3-24:** Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are now or have been under-represented in the community, as demographics change over time, to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.
2. Provide support for people with dementia and their caregivers.
3. Provide information and programming in other languages for non-English speakers.
4. Work with local restaurants to develop “Purple Tables,” which could include providing meals at quieter times of day, separate dining areas, or simpler menus that offer a relaxed dining environment for people with dementia and their care partners.
5. Ensure that communication methods reach all residents.
6. Incorporate equity and inclusion in all programs – for all races, ethnicities, LGBTQ+, etc.
7. Continue to conduct intergenerational programming with COA, colleges, schools, library.

Culture of Inclusion Action Plan

# MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1 3-24	Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are now or have been under-represented in the community, as demographics change over time, to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.	SHCTV All boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of videos. ▪ Number of boards and committees participating. ▪ Feedback from viewers. 	ST
2	Provide support for people with dementia and their caregivers.	COA, WestMass Elder Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of support groups or programs ▪ # of participants 	
3	Provide information and programming in other languages for non-English speakers.	COA, Town Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy on translation and interpretation ▪ Translated documents ▪ Programs that offer interpreters 	
4	Work with local restaurants to develop “Purple Tables,” – quieter times, dining areas, and menus that offer a relaxed dining environment for people with dementia and their care partners.	COA, Alzheimer’s Association, Local restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainings for restaurant managers and staff ▪ Number of participating restaurants ▪ Outreach materials 	
5	Ensure that communication methods reach all residents.	COA, Municipal departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communications Plan 	
6	Incorporate equity and inclusion in all programs – for all races, ethnicities, LGBTQ+, etc.	COA, Parks & Recreation, Municipal Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Healthy Aging For All Inclusive Crosswalk for all programming ▪ Attendance at programs 	
7	Continue to conduct intergenerational programming with COA, colleges, schools, library.	COA, Schools, Mt. Holyoke College, Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intergenerational programs 	

Food Security

The development of this Action Plan for a more Age and Dementia Friendly Community was underway during the COVID-19 pandemic, when businesses and restaurants were closed, and older adults were cautioned to stay out of public places to avoid contracting the virus. In addition to the increased anxiety that many felt over the state-mandated shutdown, those who did not have access to personal vehicles had difficulty accessing food, especially if they were in need of emergency food resources such as food pantries or the congregate meals offered by the Senior Center during “normal” times. As a result, the South Hadley Senior Center offered an alternative meal delivery program to congregate meal site members. Working with WestMass ElderCare, the Senior Center staff assisted members in signing up for a daily, delivered meal through WestMass ElderCare’s Home Meals on Wheels program. The Senior Center also provided monthly shelf stable food items, curbside pickup and delivery by the COA minibus. The longstanding Brown Bag Program supplied by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts was adapted to a curbside pickup and delivery system as well.

The Friends of South Hadley Seniors is a 501c3 that raises funds to cover social events, subsidized meals and other services for South Hadley Seniors that are not covered in the Town budget.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a “client-choice food pantry” that serves South Hadley and Granby. This organization, started in 2011 by the United Methodist Church in South Hadley serves approximately 150 families each month, providing six to eight days of food for each household member with support from food drives, fundraising, and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Fresh vegetables are provided from the Food Pantry Garden when they are in season. The pantry also provides personal care products, household products, and pet food when available.

Master Plan Goal: Recognize and address Food Insecurity in the South Hadley Community and Integrate emergency food systems and programs to address food insecurity for vulnerable community members.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- Meal delivery programs by Senior Center and Neighbors helping Neighbors
- Transportation offered through the Senior Center to local grocery stores
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors mobile food bank (confirm)

Priority Actions:

1. Conduct screenings to identify food insecurity and prioritize access to healthy food as a health need.
2. Develop an accessible and reliable database of social resources.
3. Implement an active referral system.

4. Reduce or remove language and cultural barriers to accessing food.
5. Address the effects of malnutrition by providing nutritional education throughout the community.
6. Simplify the permitting system for food distribution to families and individuals in need.

Food Security Action Plan

# MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Conduct screenings to identify food insecurity and prioritize access to healthy food as a health need.	Health care providers; COA; NHN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data from health screenings 	ST
2	Develop an accessible and reliable database of social resources.	COA, 413-Cares, Social Service Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Service Database ▪ Participation in 413-Cares 	
3	Implement an active referral system.	Health Care providers, NHN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Referral system ▪ Participation in 413-Cares 	
4	Reduce or remove language and cultural barriers to accessing food.	NHN; Health Department, Faith community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey ▪ Information translated into other languages 	
5	Address the effects of malnutrition by providing nutritional education throughout the community.	Health Dept; schools, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School wellness policy ▪ Nutrition education programs 	
6	Simplify the permitting system for food distribution to families and individuals in need.	Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simplified permitting system for emergency food distribution 	ST

Transportation

Transportation independence is a primary concern for older adults, particularly as individuals lose the ability to drive personal vehicles. Transportation services can allow people to do basic errands and get to medical appointments. Likewise, the ability to walk or use a wheelchair comfortably and safely to access basic services as well as recreational opportunities can allow someone to remain independent and active beyond their driving years.

The South Hadley Master Plan Update includes a focus on Connections, including Physical, Social, and Virtual connections, as vital to the health and well-being of all members of the community, pointing out that social isolation was a major concern during the pandemic, when there was greater reliance on virtual connections to maintain social interaction. According to the Master Plan, Physical connections include the “non-vehicular (i.e. walking and biking) connections such as multi-modal paths that, when possible, are separate from the roads.

The 2010 South Hadley Master Plan includes a discussion of public transit and the 5-college bus service that is available through the PVTA. The Master Plan Update does not discuss transit but focuses primarily on physical infrastructure for walking and biking. Missing from both plans is an inventory of the transportation services that are oriented to older adults and people with disabilities.

Transportation Services

Services such as public transportation via bus or train, senior center vans, and private transportation services become more and more important for people as they age. Balance issues, fragile bones and the hearing and vision impairments that come with age create additional challenges to mobility and greater need for assistance in getting around. **Figure 2** below shows the estimated ages where people may start to require more transportation services, while **Figure 3** illustrates the continuum of assistance that may be needed not only on the road, but also from the transit stop to the door and sometimes through the door. When people can use public transit and walk to transit stops, it is important to have good lighting and sidewalks. When they can no longer walk, they may require paratransit or private transportation services, and in some cases caregivers to assist them into and out of vehicles.

The South Hadley Senior Center offers transportation through senior center vans, and a medical ride program funded through WestMass ElderCare, under the Older Americans Act. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) runs buses through South Hadley and on-demand paratransit for seniors and people with disabilities. All of these services must be scheduled in advance.

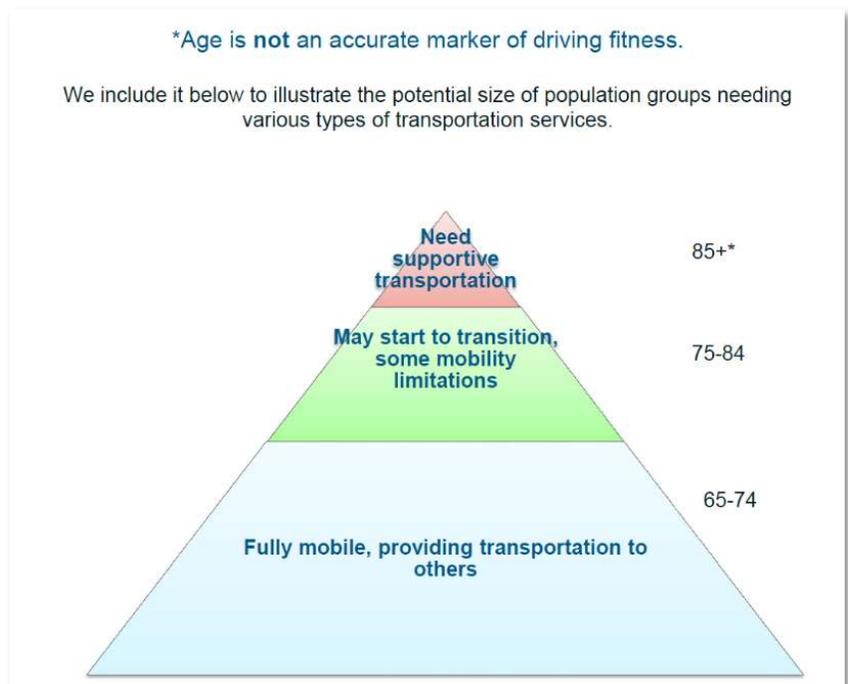


Figure 2 - Estimated Ages when Transportation Services may be needed. (Source: UMass Gerontology Institute).

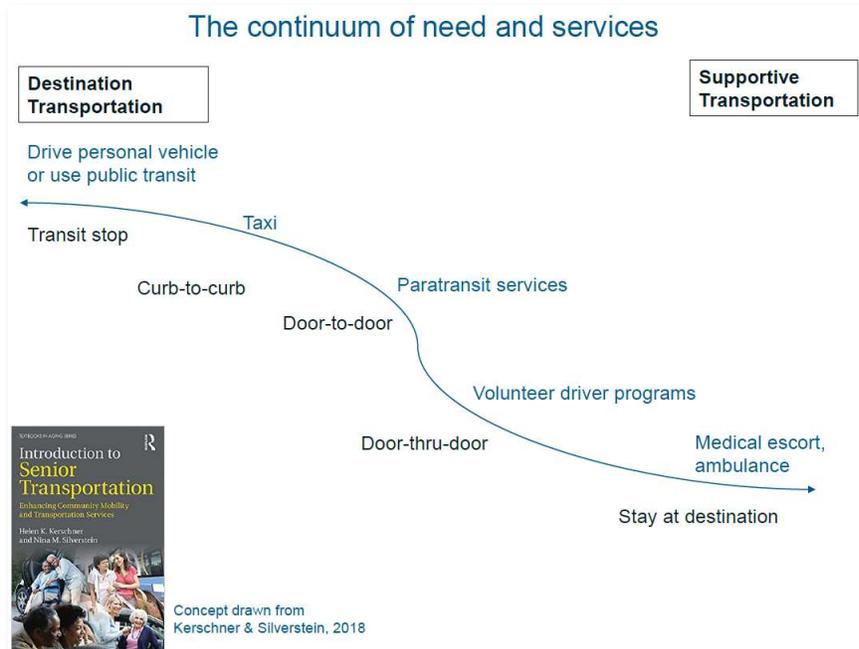


Figure 3 - Continuum of Needs and Services. (Source: UMass Gerontology Institute – see above).

Walking and Biking Infrastructure

In response to the Livable Communities Survey question about how people get around for shopping, doctors' appointments, and errands 43% of respondents from South Hadley said that they walk. Walk scores have been developed for cities and towns throughout the United States (www.walkscore.com). Scores are based on the distance to amenities as well as pedestrian friendliness through analysis of block length and intersection density and can be provided for specific addresses or for cities, towns or zip codes. The Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative uses walk scores for the town or city as a whole in the data that is compiled for the Community Assessments. In this data set, South Hadley has a walkability score of 54.

Elements of walkability that may not be captured in Walk Scores include the availability and condition of sidewalks, lighting, benches, well-lit and well-timed crosswalks, and the number of crashes involving pedestrians. Over 90% of people who filled out the Livable Communities Survey responded that sidewalks in good condition for use by pedestrians as well as wheelchairs, well maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different abilities, and well maintained and accessible public restrooms are extremely important or very important. When asked whether the community has these facilities (Q18), the greatest response in the negative (67% in South Hadley) was regarding sidewalks.

Several resources exist for cities and towns to plan for a safe and connected network of sidewalks. In Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Complete Streets program provides funding for planning and implementation for a network of sidewalks, bike facilities (including bike lanes or separated paths), and transit stops to provide infrastructure for active forms of transportation along with cars, trucks and buses. South Hadley has adopted a Complete Streets policy and a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and has received funding for building bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure through this program.

Safe Routes to School is another program that is funded by MassDOT but focused on the areas around schools. This program provides free audits of sidewalk infrastructure to ensure safe and comfortable travel routes to encourage more children to walk to school. As communities encourage more intergenerational programs, the SRTS program will benefit older adults as well as children.

Of respondents to the Livable Communities Survey, 20% of respondents said that they biked for transportation. These numbers suggest that bike infrastructure is an important part of the roadway infrastructure. The Town has installed several ValleyBike Share electric assist bicycle stations that can be rented by the hour with a credit card or subsidized annual pass. For older adults and people who are less comfortable sharing roadways with cars, a network of shared use paths and bike lanes that are buffered from traffic will attract the greatest number of users.

Transportation Assets and Accomplishments:

- Senior Center vans & medical transportation program. An Electric Vehicle charging station is located at the Senior Center and the Town has received funding to purchase an Electric Vehicle for their medical transportation program.
- Senior Housing transportation services
- Added pick-up dates on Wednesdays for food pantry
- Sidewalk network, trail network
- Bike & Walk Committee
- Participation in the Complete Streets program
- PVTa paratransit and rides for seniors
- Medical Ride service through Friends of South Hadley Seniors
- Hospital transportation for medical appointments
- ValleyBike Share electric assist bicycles available for use in several locations (with a credit card or pass)
- Bus Shelters at Pleasant & Main (X90A), Woodlawn Plaza; shelters offered inside police station for R29 & bathroom facilities

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: South Hadley Creates an environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

Objective 1-4: Improve connections for all, including those with varied abilities, and especially to open space and recreational activities to support community health and engagement.

Priority Actions:

1. Work with other town committees to survey community members every few years on the need for additional transportation and other services.
2. Provide additional transportation services as needed (both paratransit and general).
3. **G1-39:** Increase affordable transportation options.
4. **G1-4:** Support Town efforts to provide access routes for pedestrians and bikes in new business projects.
5. Explore the feasibility of offering electric assist tricycles for older adults and people with disabilities.
6. Add electric vehicles to provide additional transportation services without increasing carbon footprint.
7. Add amenities on multi-modal paths (benches, shade trees, public restrooms), and provide information on paths that are accessible and have these amenities.
8. Add bus shelter for R29 by post office for southbound riders.
9. Support the development of multi-modal paths and other safe and comfortable trail connections for bicycles and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

Transportation Action Plan

# MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Work with other town committees to survey community members every few years on the need for additional transportation and other services.	COA, Planning, PVTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual survey ▪ Use of COA and PVTA vans 	
2	Provide additional transportation services as needed (both paratransit and general).	COA, PVTA, Town Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ride services, times of operation, ridership 	
3 G1-39	Increase affordable transportation options.	COA; Town Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of transportation service options ▪ Times/days offered ▪ Ridership 	
4 G1-4	Support Town efforts to provide access routes for pedestrians and bikes in new business projects.	Planning Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning amendments 	

5	Explore the feasibility of offering electric assist tricycles for older adults and people with disabilities.	ValleyBike, COA, Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feasibility/cost assessment ▪ Valley Trike program 	
6	Add electric vehicles to provide additional transportation services without increasing carbon footprint.	COA, Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of electric vehicles ▪ # of trips made by electric vs gas-powered vehicles 	
7	Add amenities on multi-modal paths (benches, shade trees, public restrooms), and provide information on paths that are accessible and have these amenities.	Parks & Recreation, Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of trails with benches, other amenities ▪ Trail map showing accessible/Age &/or Dementia Friendly trails 	
8	Inventory bus shelters and add where needed, including next to the Post Office for southbound riders on the R29 route.	Planning, DPW, PVTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory of bus shelters ▪ # of accessible bus shelters 	
9	Support the development of multi-modal paths and other safe and comfortable trail connections for bicycles and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.	DPW, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Miles of shared-use paths ▪ Comfort level of bicycle network 	

Communication, Information and Technology

The Communication, Information and Technology Domain spans all other domains, as residents must know where to find information about programs, services, and places that are age and dementia friendly in order to use and appreciate these resources. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of technology for communication, shopping, participating in fitness programming, and telehealth services, as well as for maintaining social and family connections when the Senior Center, businesses, restaurants and cultural venues were closed. This elevation of technology as a key means for connecting people during the pandemic also illuminated the gap in use and access to technology known as the “Digital Divide.” This divide can be caused by the expense of purchasing a device or internet service as well as the knowledge of how to use devices such as computers or laptops, or the software for online communications or meetings.

The South Hadley Senior Center received funding to purchase several Ipads to loan out to older adults who did not have a computer or Ipad and provided training on how to use these devices,

and also assisted residents with signing up for Comcast Essentials (low-cost internet) during the pandemic. The Senior Center also offered programming via Zoom and Cable Access television to keep people active and engaged while the Senior Center was closed. The majority (87%) of respondents to the Livable Community survey (administered in 2019) reported that they got information about services through the internet, and 82% said that they access the internet several times a day. However, this survey was mainly administered online so may have missed people who did not have access to computers. Most Livable Community survey respondents said that they get information about services for seniors from the senior center or from family and friends.

The South Hadley Master Plan, also developed during the pandemic, highlights the importance of high-speed internet and the potential changing work patterns that will result from people working from home during the pandemic. One of the main goals (Goal 4) of the Master Plan is to make the Town a leader in municipal communication. This goal, as well as the first goal of creating an environment where all community members can prosper and thrive, supports the need for a communications system that is inclusive of all residents, including people whose first language is not English. An increasing number of people moving to the area from Puerto Rico and other countries has highlighted the need for translation and interpreter services.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- South Hadley Electric Light District (SHELD):
 - supports website, newsletters, social media and safety awareness programs;
 - provides fiber optic internet connections;
 - ensures the availability of fiber and network redundancy to support excellent response times during emergencies.⁴
- I-pad Loan & training Program through the Town (Cares Act)
- COA assists with application & payment for Comcast Essentials
- WiFi access offered at the Library, Senior Center and the Town Hall
- The Senior Center will be awarded a scholarship from SHELD to cover the costs of the 5-year Commercial Cloud Network Plan for the new EV Station.

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 3: South Hadley incorporates measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town's resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, changing demographic trends, climate change, or other stressors.

⁴ South Hadley Master Plan. December 2020 draft, page 35.

Objective 3-4: Develop a program to connect all residents and businesses to the proposed fiber network. Provide appropriate training and devices for low-income and/or elderly households.

Goal 4: South Hadley is a leader in municipal communication.

Objective 4-4: Provide timely information about Town actions, services, meetings and events.

Objective 4-5: Function well and consistently in an emergency, with connections to regional resources.

Priority Actions:

1. **MP G3-27:** Provide internet connectivity to every household and business in South Hadley with a combination of broadband, fiber and Wi-Fi.
2. **MP G3-28:** Establish a grant program to provide internet-enabled devices to low-income households.
3. Assist residents in accessing low cost or free broadband service.
4. **MP G3-29:** Work with Council on Aging and Library to provide training for those unfamiliar with connecting to online resources. Engage older adults, high school and college students to assist with training.
5. Provide accommodations for vision & hearing impaired.
6. Offer alternatives to online forms and assistance in filling them out. Municipal forms are mailed upon request from town, but State forms may not be offered in hard copy form.
7. Develop a Communications Plan that serves all ages and abilities.
8. Provide information and programming in other languages for non-English speakers.
9. Increase person-to-person outreach for vulnerable populations.
10. **MP G4-17:** Promote the Town’s Age Friendly initiatives.

Communications Action Plan

# MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1 G3-27	Provide internet connectivity to every household and business in South Hadley with a combination of broadband, fiber and Wi-Fi.	Town administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # and % of households connected to internet 	
2 G3-28	Establish a grant program to provide internet-enabled devices to low-income households.	COA, Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant program ▪ # devices distributed 	

3	Assist residents in accessing low cost or free broadband service.	Town, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # connected to low-cost internet ▪ Agreements with service providers 	
4 G3-29	Work with Council on Aging and Library to provide training for those unfamiliar with connecting to online resources. Engage older adults, high school and college students to assist with trainings	COA, Library, schools, Mt. Holyoke College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training programs ▪ # of participants 	
5	Provide accommodations for vision & hearing impaired.	Municipal departments, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Devices for vision and hearing impaired 	
6	Offer alternatives to online forms and assistance in filling them out. (Note: Municipal forms are mailed upon request from town, but State forms may not be offered in hard copy form.)	Municipal departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # paper forms requested 	
7	Develop a Communications Plan that serves all ages and abilities.	Municipal Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communications plan 	
8 (Also an Inclusion Action)	Provide information and programming in other languages for non-English speakers.	COA, Town Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy on translation and interpretation ▪ Translated documents ▪ Programs that offer interpreters 	
9	Increase person-to-person outreach for vulnerable populations.	COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # people contacted ▪ List of vulnerable households/individuals 	
10 G4-17	Promote the Town's Age Friendly initiatives.	COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion campaign 	

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Outdoor spaces and buildings provide places for people to gather. Parks and smooth sidewalks with benches for resting, bike paths and bike lanes, accessible buildings and restrooms are all

facilities that are important for inviting active transportation and social interaction inside and out. The amount of physical activity that people engage in is related, in part, to the availability of safe and convenient places to walk and ride a bike. Data at the county level shows that in Hampshire County, 78.3% of people 60 and over engaged in physical activity in the last month.⁵ According to the results of the Livable Communities Survey, over 78% of survey respondents in South Hadley engaged in physical activity several times a week or every day.

South Hadley has two major natural resources: over six miles of riverfront land along the Connecticut River and the Mount Holyoke Range. The Town also offers large areas of open space and areas dedicated to recreation use. Plans for maintenance and improvements to these areas are included in the 2020 South Hadley Open Space and Recreation Plan, and key conservation and recreation areas are listed in the South Hadley Master Plan.

Public Buildings

Public buildings provide spaces for people to gather and engage in community events, and to participate in public meetings or other civic opportunities. South Hadley has developed an “ADA transition plan” to ensure that all public buildings meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for accessibility.

The Town built a new Senior Center that opened in the summer of 2021 and is connected to other public buildings including the library and elementary school by sidewalks that are ADA compliant. The Town also recently built a fitness trail that circles the Senior Center and baseball field and includes fitness stations. This campus-like setting offers opportunities for intergenerational programming and provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for older adults and all community members.

In addition to having two libraries in town, South Hadley is home to Mount Holyoke College. Colleges and universities may be designated as Age Friendly by adding programming and facilities for older adults (see the Social Participation section below). Part of being an Age Friendly institution is to ensure that the built environment can accommodate people with mobility limitations.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- Recently opened Senior Center is located within walking distance of the library and elementary school
- Walking loop next to the boathouse along CT river and at Mt. Holyoke College.
- Buttery Brook Park – Accessible walk for people in wheelchair
- Strong volunteer Bike/Walk committee
- Fitness track at the Senior Center (under construction)

⁵ Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Community Profile data

- Installation for two adult fitness stations along the fitness track.

Master Plan Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: South creates an environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

Objective 1-4: Improve connections for all, including those with varied abilities, and especially to open space and recreational activities to support community health and engagement.

Goal 3: South Hadley incorporates measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town’s resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, changing demographic trends, climate change, or other stressors.

Objective 3-5: Identify and take advantage of non-tax base revenue sources.

Priority Actions:

1. Provide benches in parks and along walking trails.
2. Make more parks and trails handicapped accessible publicize which are accessible; add wayfinding signs.
3. Complete trail connections for a network of trails that are accessible for people of all ages and abilities.
4. **MP G1-1:** Develop and distribute brochures/simple trail maps, provide support for improved wayfinding
5. **MP G1-24:** Work with other Town entities to create a plan for locating/ developing outdoor gathering spaces and seating, and advocate for public outdoor seating/areas as a priority in all new business and housing projects. Develop and maintain a master map of all outdoor seating and gathering areas.
6. **MP G3-2:** Develop campaign for residents to sponsor benches, increasing seating

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Action Plan

# MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Provide benches in parks and along walking trails.	DPW, Parks & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of parks with benches ▪ Map of bench locations 	
2	Make more parks and trails handicapped accessible publicize which are accessible; add wayfinding signs.	Parks and Recreation, Conservation, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ADA transition plan ▪ # of parks and trails that are fully accessible 	

3	Complete trail connections and fitness stations that are accessible for people of all ages and abilities.	Parks and Recreation, Conservation, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Miles of trails ▪ Fitness stations 	
4 G1-1	Develop and distribute brochures/simple trail maps, provide support for improved wayfinding	Bike/Walk Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of brochures developed ▪ # brochures distributed 	
5 G1-24	Work with other Town entities to create a plan for locating/developing outdoor gathering spaces and seating, and advocate for public outdoor seating/areas as a priority in all new business and housing projects. Develop and maintain a master map of all outdoor seating and gathering areas.	Planning & Conservation; Department; Bike/Walk Committee; Commission on Disabilities; Conservation Commission; Department of Public Works; Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of gathering/seating areas created. Distribution of areas throughout town. 	
6 G3-2	Develop campaign for residents to sponsor benches, increasing seating	Bike/Walk Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of benches installed. Number of donors. 	

Health Care and Community Services

Residents of South Hadley are in the service areas of the Holyoke Medical Center and Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and are also close to hospitals located in Springfield (Baystate, Mercy, Shriners). The Senior Center offers rides to medical appointments out of town through a ride service operated by paid drivers who use their personal vehicles to provide rides.

As the number of people aging in place increases in a community, so does the need for services such as home modification programs, home health care, transportation, and food delivery.

WestMass Eldercare, a nonprofit elder services organization, offers a number of services that allow people to age in place. Services include in-home support to assist with daily living needs, support for caregivers, nursing assessment, home delivered meals, and specialized programs for those who are eligible for MassHealth or long-term care.

The 413-Cares Website is a central database of health and social service resources available in the Pioneer Valley. The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts coordinates this initiative and partner organizations are responsible for keeping their information up to date.

The website offers data on referrals and use of each resource, providing valuable information for the participating agencies.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- Senior Center offers a grant funded scholarship, through WestMass ElderCare to provide respite care funds to South Hadley caregivers of an individual with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease.
- Savvy Caregivers class taught at Loomis Communities in 2018-19 and via Zoom during the pandemic (through the Senior Center)
- WestMass Elder Care offers Caregiver Support Groups, home care
- Case Management through WestMass Elder Care
- Pharmacy delivery services through Big Y and stores outside of South Hadley.
- Memory training class designed by UCLA and taught at the Senior Center for people with age-related memory loss

Priorities for Action:

1. Investigate Village Model to support aging in place with volunteer-driven non-medical assistance.
2. Survey older adults to determine what non-medical services they need to age in place.
3. Provide information on where people can rent or borrow medical equipment and participate in home modification programs.
4. Ensure access to telemedicine through increasing access to equipment and support.
5. Evaluate Long-Term Care needs of residents.

Health Care and Community Services Action Plan

MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Investigate Village Model to support aging in place with volunteer-driven non-medical assistance.	COA Friends of SH Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research on Village Model ▪ Committee interested in setting up Village Model 	
2	Survey older adults to determine what non-medical services they need to age in place.	COA, WestMass Elder Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey of older residents 	
3	Provide information on where people can rent or borrow medical equipment and participate in home modification programs.	COA, PVPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information resources ▪ 413-Cares participation 	

4	Ensure access to telemedicine through increasing access to equipment and support.	COA, area hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providers offering access to telemedicine 	
5	Evaluate Long Term Care needs of residents and availability of agencies and subsidized long-term care providers.	COA, WestMass Eldercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey of long-term care needs ▪ Committee to look at long-term care needs and gaps in coverage 	

Housing

Housing was a topic of discussion during several of the public forums conducted during the development of the Master Plan and is one of the domains covered in the Livable Community Survey that was administered in 2018-19. South Hadley has adopted a Housing Production Plan in 2016. This document includes an inventory of the housing that is available in the community as well as a plan for achieving the goal of 10% of the housing stock being affordable to households earning up to 80% of the area median income (AMI).

The three greatest challenges noted in the South Hadley Housing Production Plan included the following:

- *South Hadley’s population is aging and is expected to continue trending older. This is expected to lead to an increase in individuals living on a fixed income and/or requiring special accommodations within their homes. Trends also suggest an increased demand for walkable areas where older individuals have access to the amenities necessary to meet daily needs. Homes that are equipped to handle aging in place, located in walkable areas and/or are affordable will be in high demand and the existing stock in South Hadley will not meet this existing need.*
- *Rental units, both market-rate and affordable, are a limited segment of South Hadley’s housing stock. Approximately one-fourth of South Hadley’s housing stock is rental unit and the rental vacancy rate is extremely low. Affordable units in South Hadley are in particularly low supply, with an eight to ten year waitlist for subsidized rental units. Lastly, in South Hadley and across the region, the development of rental units has stagnated, limiting even the number of market rate apartments available.*
- *In many instances the current zoning in South Hadley requires that minimum lot sizes be ½ acre or larger. These requirements mean that even if a small home were built on the lot, it would still be unaffordable because of the cost of the land. This creates a barrier of entry into the market for many that can’t afford the high costs associated with large*

*parcels of land and is especially difficult for those first-time homebuyers trying to enter the market.*⁶

The Master Plan discusses the need for a variety of housing types to serve the needs of all residents. Currently, the majority of South Hadley's housing stock is single family homes, and there is a shortage of affordable housing and housing for senior residents. The Master Plan also notes that close to 50% of renters are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened compared to less than 25% of homeowners.⁷ The Master Plan recommends the development of housing options for all ages and incomes in the neighborhoods surrounding the Village Commons and Mt. Holyoke College, the Woodlawn neighborhood, and South Hadley Falls.

Continuum of Care Housing

Some older adults choose to move into housing developments that include some level of services, meal plans, or nursing care to support people as they age. In South Hadley, Loomis Village offers Independent living units and Assisted Living, which provides some services but not full nursing care. The Vero Health and Rehab of South Hadley facility offers long-term care and rehabilitation.

Aging in Place

Many older adults, particularly in communities where there are few other options, choose to "age in place," or to stay in their own homes with modifications and assistance as needed. Most respondents to the Livable Community Survey said that it was extremely important to be able to continue to live independently at their own homes.

Options such as house sharing or the ability to build an accessory apartment could enable older adults to stay in larger homes or to downsize into an attached or detached smaller home on their property. Currently, South Hadley does not have provisions for building accessory dwelling units (apartments or separate structures that are separate dwelling units but smaller than the main dwelling unit) in their bylaws.

Likewise, as people get older they can encounter barriers to mobility within their own homes. Most survey respondents (57% in South Hadley) said that bathroom modifications would be needed in their homes to make them more accessible. A Home Loan Modification Program is available through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) for seniors and people with diagnosed disabilities.

Around the country, many innovative options are being developed to allow people to remain in their homes. A Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) is a building or neighborhood in which there is a substantial number of residents aged 60 or older. This

⁶ South Hadley Housing Production Plan (2016)

⁷ South Hadley Master Plan (December 2020 draft), p. 48

phenomenon happens over time as people move to a place and decide to stay there. Some NORCs connect with nonprofit service providers or form their own nonprofits to provide services for senior residents. Similarly, the Village model provides services such as rides, low-cost home maintenance services to members who pay a small fee to be part of the Village network.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- The South Hadley Housing Production Plan adopted in 2016 includes recommendations for building a range of housing types to serve the needs of an aging population.
- Low to moderate income housing managed by Housing Authority; Newton Manor and Lathrop Village
- Hubert Place provides supportive congregate housing owned by WestMass ElderCare
- Loomis Communities offers market rate independent and assisted living
- Riverboat Village and Kenlee Gardens provide some Section 8 housing
- WestMass Elder Care provides services for people aging in place
- Home Modification Loans available through PVPC
- Housing being developed in the Plaza on Newton Street includes housing for seniors
- Redevelopment authority is working on educating people about affordable housing to reduce stigma.

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: South Hadley creates an environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

Objective 1-3: Support development of housing at different scales and prices.

Priority Actions:

1. Support Town efforts to adopt inclusionary zoning policies and to allow for conversion of single-family homes to multiple units and/or to add accessory apartments to properties with single family homes.
2. **MP G1-20:** Work closely with COA to generate citizen discussion on types/locations of senior/ affordable housing.
3. **MP G1-26:** Identify funding sources and actions to increase affordable/senior housing.
4. Investigate innovative models of housing for older adults such as co-housing, cottage housing.
5. Support development of housing for all ages and incomes through advocacy and education.
6. Access funds to make Housing Authority property units more accessible – made community meeting room at Newton Manor, Lathrop Village.

7. Participate in a Housing Committee or Housing Trust to engage older adults on types of housing they want/need
8. **MP G1-33:** Distribute information about existing home modification loan programs for low-income families and people with disabilities.
9. Support the ability of homeowners to add Accessory Apartments to their homes or properties (through zoning amendment).
10. Work with Commission on Disability to develop standards for access to all housing developments and to assist people with aging in place.

Housing Action Plan

MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Support Town efforts to adopt inclusionary zoning policies and to allow for conversion of single-family homes to multiple units and/or to add accessory apartments to properties with single family homes.	COA Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning amendments 	
2 G1-20	Work closely with COA to generate citizen discussion on types/locations of senior/affordable housing	Planning Board; Commission on Disabilities; Council on Aging; Falls Neighborhood Association; Housing Authority; Redevelopment Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of discussions; # of participants; results of discussions 	ST
3 G1-26	Identify funding sources and actions to increase affordable/senior housing.	Planning & Conservation Dept; Redevelopment Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of sources identified ▪ Actions taken ▪ Amount of money raised 	ST
4	Investigate innovative models of housing for older adults such as co-housing, cottage housing.	Planning Board; COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research conducted ▪ Public forums 	
5	Support development of housing for all ages and incomes through advocacy and education.	COA; Planning Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education and outreach programs on housing 	

6	Access funds to make Housing Authority property units more accessible.	Housing Authority; Planning Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funds for improved accessibility 	
7	Participate in a Housing Committee or Housing Trust to engage older adults on types of housing they want/need.	Planning Board; COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formation of housing committee or housing trust 	
8 G-1-33	Distribute information about existing home modification loan programs for low-income families and people with disabilities.	Redevelopment Authority; Falls Neighborhood Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of people reached. ▪ # of people applying. ▪ # of rehabilitation projects completed. 	Immediate (1 year)
9	Support the ability of homeowners to add Accessory Apartments to their homes or properties (through zoning amendment).	COA; Planning Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessory Apartment bylaw 	
10	Work with Commission on Disability to develop standards for access to all housing developments and to assist people with aging in place.	Planning Dept.; Commission on Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access standards for new housing development 	

Public Safety & Resiliency

Funded through a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant, the South Hadley Master Plan Update centers around the resiliency of the community both in terms of the social and physical infrastructure of the community and its ability to respond to challenges such as economic downturns, natural disasters, and pandemics. Older adults are often recognized as a priority populations to consider during emergencies, therefore it is important to include them in planning for community resiliency.

The Town participates in a Triad program that involves the Police and Fire departments with the Council on Aging and older adults to discuss safety needs, and to address programs such as the “File of Life” documents that are recommended for people with health concerns. All of the departments participating in the Triad program can help people with filling out the forms that are included in the File of Life and encourage people to keep these files up to date. The police

department keeps a “Persons at Risk” finder for potential wanderers including people with dementia or autism.

Ensuring that first responders are trained on how to recognize people with dementia and to communicate with them is a goal of the Age and Dementia Friendly Working Group. Several volunteers working with the Council on Aging held trainings for fire fighters and first responders in 2016 and 2018. This group plans to continue to hold these trainings for all municipal staff going forward.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- Dementia training for First Responders and Firefighters in 2016 and 2018
- Police & Fire Departments (Districts 1 & 2) and Senior Center have File of Life program and assist people in filling out forms – tied to Critical Incident and Management Plan
- Persons at Risk finder – for potential wanderers (including people with dementia, autism)
- TRIAD (under Seniors and Law Enforcement Together) representation from police and fire dept – include COA

Priorities for Action:

1. Ensure that emergency personnel are aware of where people with dementia live and how to work with them.
2. Ensure that people who need them have a “file of life” in sight and that these are updated as needed. Link to Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)
3. Keep “Persons at Risk” file up to date and educate community about how to sign up.
4. **MP G3-10:** Consider Alternative heating and cooling sites and develop map of existing sites.

Public Safety and Resiliency Action Plan

MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Ensure that emergency personnel are aware of where people with dementia live and how to work with them.	COA; Dementia Friendly Committee; Emergency responders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of trainings offered ▪ # Emergency Service personnel trained 	
2	Ensure that people who need them have a “file of life” in sight and that these are updated as needed. Link to Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).	COA, Triad participants (Police & Fire Depts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of File of Life forms filled out ▪ Reminders to keep files up to date 	

3	Keep "Persons at Risk" file up to date and educate community about how to sign up.	Fire and Police departments, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ # of people on file ▪ Process for updating file 	
4 G3-10	Consider Alternative heating and cooling sites and develop map of existing sites.	Town administration, Fire Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alternative heating and cooling sites 	

Social Participation

As older people lose their ability to drive, they also lose their ability to get out and visit friends or attend community events. Social isolation and loneliness can be as debilitating as some chronic diseases and contribute to poor health outcomes. This was especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic, when most businesses, public buildings and transportation services were closed.

South Hadley opened a new senior center in June of 2021. The Senior Center was designed to work with surrounding buildings and walkways to form a campus-like environment. The senior center is very active, as are the residents and visitors who use them.

Many older adults pursue continuing education opportunities as an activity to get out and interact with other people. According to the Livable Communities Survey, the Senior Center was the most popular destination for continuing education classes.

South Hadley is home to Mount Holyoke College, providing an opportunity for intergenerational and education programs. As many colleges and universities struggle with a decreasing number of college-age youth, offering classes and programs for older adults could be a great opportunity for

The 10 Age-Friendly University Principles

1. To encourage the participation of older adults in all the **core activities** of the university, including educational and research programs.
2. To promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue **second careers**.
3. To recognize the **range of educational needs** of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue Master's or PhD qualifications).
4. To promote **intergenerational learning** to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
5. To widen access to **online educational opportunities** for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation.
6. To ensure that the university's **research agenda** is informed by the needs of an aging society and to promote public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
7. To increase the understanding of students of **the longevity dividend** and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society.
8. To enhance access for older adults to the university's range of **health and wellness** programs and its **arts and cultural activities**.
9. To engage actively with the university's own retired community.

Figure 4: Ten Age Friendly University Principles¹

remaining viable. Figure 8 outlines the ten principles of an “Age Friendly University.”

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs – see Housing section above) or a Village model of service and can also provide a support network of neighbors and area nonprofits.

Assets and Accomplishments:

- Social Calls program started by Friends group will provide check-in calls and connect people with resources available in the community.
- COA programs – calling seniors and doing check-ins during pandemic, HELLO program – sending monthly cards
- Monthly Community Outreach visits to all three senior housing locations to provide information on programs and services at the Senior Center. These events – opportunity to socialize

Priority Actions:

1. Combat Social Isolation through continued outreach and programming.
2. Start a Volunteer Companion program – for errands, coffee, etc. – possibly partner with schools, colleges, churches.
3. Continue to explore the development of Tenant Associations.

Social Participation Action Plan

MP #	Actions	Entities Responsible	Evaluation Metrics	Priority
1	Combat Social Isolation through continued outreach and programming.	COA; Friends of SH Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programming ▪ # of new people attending 	
2	Start a Volunteer Companion program – for errands, coffee, etc. – possibly partner with schools, colleges, churches.	Friends of SH Seniors; COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Companion program ▪ # of participants 	
3	Continue to explore the development of Tenant Associations in Housing Authority properties.	Housing Authority; COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tenant associations established 	
4	Investigate the interest and feasibility of making Mount Holyoke College an Age Friendly University.	COA; Mount Holyoke College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Representative from Mt. Holyoke college identified to serve on working group ▪ Age Friendly University status 	

Action Plan Implementation

This Community Assessment and Action Plan for an Age and Dementia Friendly South Hadley details goals and strategies for improving South Hadley's social and built environments to ensure that the town is a welcoming place for people of all ages and abilities. While this plan is targeted at actions that are priorities for implementation in the next five years, this report is a dynamic document that will be amended as conditions change in the community.

The Age and Dementia Friendly South Hadley Working Group was formed to work with the PVPC on the development of this Community Assessment and Action Plan. Many of the actions included in this plan were also included in the South Hadley Master Plan which, as of the writing of this report, is still in the process of being finalized and adopted by the Town. An implementation committee for the South Hadley Master Plan has been appointed to see the plan through implementation. A similar group, made up of members of the core working group and others identified by the larger Ad Hoc working group, will be developed to implement strategies on the following pages. In addition, the following steps are recommended for the implementation of this report:

- 1) Develop an Implementation Committee for an Age and Dementia Friendly South Hadley. Continue to build this committee to include sectors of the community as well as regional and state partner organizations and agencies.
- 2) Distribute the Community Assessment and Action Plan to Town boards, committees, social groups and faith organizations to solicit input and volunteers for an implementation committee, and to build awareness of ways that these groups can participate in making South Hadley Age and Dementia Friendly.
- 3) Submit report to AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts for final certification as an Age and Dementia Friendly Community.
- 4) Meet at least quarterly and select strategies for implementation each year.
- 5) Report on successes and challenges – both to the community, AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.

Appendix A

History of Dementia Friendly Activities in South Hadley

History of South Hadley Dementia Friendly Efforts

March 2015

Initial Meeting

Mike Sullivan, Town of SH
Dave LaBrie, Police
Dave Keefe, D2 Fire
Jay Houle, D1 Fire
Joanne Trybus, COA Director
Lori Souder, First Cong Church
Cathy Ormond, St Pats Church
Kurt Schenker, D1 Fire
Karen Walsh Pio, SH Schools
Bob Desnoyer, SH Chamber of Commerce
Joe Rodio, Library

June 2015

Dementia Friendly Trifold Flyer with resources developed
Dementia Friendly Educational Session held for D2 First Responders/Firefighters

October 2015

Press Conference held at SH Senior Center
Facebook page dementiafriendlycommunities established

Fall 2015

Educational series held at Library
Falls Prevention – D1 and D2
Overview of Services offered by WestMass ElderCare
Alzheimer's Association Programs
Dorene Rentz, PsyD UMass talk on Memory

Spring 2016

Alzheimer's Association Educational Series held at South Hadley Public Library
Loomis Village and O'Connell Care at Home sponsored webpage made live

????

Monthly memory Café started being held at South Hadley Senior Center

Spring 2017

Interview with Caregiver Rachel Tierney recorded and aired on South Hadley Cable Access Channel

May 2017

Dementia Friends program led by Rachel Tierney and Carol Constant
Held at South Hadley High School for health classes

Fall 2017

Dementia Education program for Know Your Town (KYT)
Held at South Hadley High School

November 2017

Dementia Education for Businesses
Held at Loomis Village for South Hadley Chamber of Commerce

February 2018

How to become a Dementia Friendly Community Event
Held at Loomis Village for COA Directors in the 4 counties of Western MA
Presenters included Leslie Hennessey, Secretary of Elder Affairs Alice Bonner and other working in the region on Dementia Friendly efforts.

May 2018

Dementia Friends program led by Rachel Tierney and Carol Constant
Held at South Hadley High School for health classes

May 2018

Series for People Supporting Aging Family Members
Held at South Hadley Senior Center, presenters include Maureen Groden, RN, MS, Cynthia Jacelon, PhD, RN, Barbara Perman, Ph.D., Rachel Tierney, PhD, RN

June 2018

First Responder Training with Alzheimer's Association
Held at Holyoke Community College

Summer 2018

Virtual Dementia Tour with Beth Cardillo held at the Senior Center

Fall 2018

Dementia Friends program led by Carol Constant
Held at the South Hadley Senior Center

May 2019

Dementia Friends program led by Carol Constant
Held at South Hadley High School for health classes

Appendix B

Healthy Aging for All Crosswalk

Inclusive Communities Crosswalk

The crosswalk can serve as a discussion and planning guide for stakeholder groups about different topics that are considerate of all residents in a city, town or region.

	 Transportation	 Housing	 Social Inclusion & Participation	 Civic Participation & Employment	 Communication and Information	 Services (Business, Community, Health)	 Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	 Public Safety	 Custom Theme
Age	 								
Behavioral Health	 								
Country of Origin	 								
Dementia	 								
Disability	 								
Economic Security	 								
Gender	 								
Location	 								
Language	 								
LGBTQIA	 								
Race/Ethnicity	 								
Religion	 								
Residential Setting	 								
Substance Use Disorder	 								
Veterans	 								
Other	 								

Inclusive Communities Worksheet

AGE- AND DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY DOMAIN

The space below can be used to note the strategies you plan to use to ensure Access, Equity and Inclusion while you strive to make your community age- and dementia-friendly.



Transportation



Housing



Social Inclusion & Participation



Civic Participation & Employment



Communication and Information



Services (Business, Community, and Health)



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



Public Safety



Custom Theme